

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. INTEGRATED OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Justification

Section 12304(d) of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act (“the Act”), part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. §§ 3601-3610; Public Law 111-11, Subtitle C), requires the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to establish an advisory committee to advise the Administrator of NOAA and the Interagency Ocean Observation Committee (IOOC) on:

- administration, operation, management, and maintenance of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System, including integration of Federal and non-Federal assets and data management and communication aspects of the System, and fulfillment of the purposes set forth in Section 12302 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 3601;
- expansion and periodic modernization and upgrade of technology components of the System;
- identification of end-user communities, their needs for information provided by the System, and the System’s effectiveness in disseminating information to end-user communities and the general public; and
- any other purpose identified by the Administrator or the IOOC.

1. *Accomplishments under Extant Charter.* The U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System Advisory Committee (IOOS AC) is functioning as an effective and knowledgeable body to advise the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and the IOOC. The 13 inaugural members of the IOOS AC were approved by the Under Secretary cleared for service in July 2012. The IOOS AC held its first meeting in August 2012, at which time the committee developed a plan including deliverables to provide optimal support to national IOOS management and future growth of IOOS. These deliverables include a statement identifying the benefits of U.S. IOOS for the Nation, to be used in messaging to the current Presidential Administration, as well as to new Federal and non-Federal partners and the public. This product was delivered to NOAA and the IOOC in June 2013. In 2015, the IOOS AC submitted recommendations on guiding principles for the IOOS enterprise which includes priority areas to consider as U.S. IOOS grows, “Elevating IOOS to a National Endeavor.” In January 2016, this Committee submitted a set of three recommendations to the NOAA Administrator and IOOC; letter in support of U.S. IOOS’ role in resilience, congratulatory letter recognizing the importance of certifying the Pacific Ocean Observing System, and a letter in support reauthorizing the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observing System Act.

2. *Need for Renewal.* The renewal of the IOOS AC charter for two years is integral to the conduct of NOAA and IOOC member agency business and is vital to public interest concerns. The functions of the committee cannot be performed by the Department of Commerce or any other Federal agency, or by any existing advisory committee.

The IOOS AC is the only Federal Advisory Committee with responsibility to advise the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and the IOOC on strategies for strengthening and growing a U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System to meet the Nation's economic, social, and environmental needs. It provides invaluable expertise and advice to the Under Secretary and IOOC regarding all aspects of administration, operation, management, and maintenance of a Federal and non-Federal, regional to national to global scale ocean observing system. There is no other Federal agency, committee, or element of the Department with existing capabilities that are provided by the IOOS AC.

The annual cost of operating the IOOS AC is estimated at up to \$90,000, which includes 0.5 person-years for staff support. This estimate was revised based on real costs and personnel time used over the first two years of administering this committee, and has remained consistent in 2015 and 2016. The extant charter estimated \$90,000 and 0.5 FTE annually, which was based on other Federal Advisory Committee's historical costs. This estimate (\$90,000) should remain the same. It is exclusive of the cost of operating subcommittees, task forces, and working groups.

3. *Balanced Membership.* The committee is composed of members appointed by the NOAA Administrator, qualified by education, training, and experience to evaluate scientific and technical information related to the design, operation, maintenance, or use of the System, or use of data products provided through the System. The diverse membership of the IOOS AC assures expertise reflecting the full breadth of NOAA's and the IOOC's responsibilities, as well as the ethnic and gender diversity of the United States. This balance of expertise, sector, gender, ethnicity, and geographical location will be maintained as vacancies are filled.

4. *Other Factors.* The advice provided by the IOOS AC to the Under Secretary and to the IOOC is crucial to maintain NOAA's ability as lead Federal agency for U.S. IOOS to carry out and continually improve its ocean observing mission. No other group of individuals, either within or outside of NOAA, has the breadth of expertise and objectivity to provide this kind of advice.